

# IRS News Release

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## Home Computer Use of E-file Jumps

IR-2004-40, Mar. 24, 2004

WASHINGTON — More and more taxpayers are using their home computers to prepare and file their returns electronically this year, according to new statistics released today by the Internal Revenue Service.

Nearly 10 million returns were self-prepared on a home computer and submitted through e-file through March 19, representing a 22.9 percent increase from last year. The increased home computer use reflected part of a bigger overall increase in e-filing, with more than 43 million returns filed electronically — an 11.4 percent increase from last year.

“Home computer users are on a record pace to use e-file this year,” said IRS Commissioner Mark W. Everson. “People are discovering that e-filing is the fastest, easiest way to do their taxes. There are fewer errors, and taxpayers get their refunds in less than half the time of paper returns.”

E-filing is showing growth in several categories. In addition to home computers, tax professional use of e-filing is up 10 percent.

And the IRS Free File program has received more than 2.46 million returns. That’s an increase of more than 24 percent, representing nearly 500,000 more returns than the same period last year.

Free File is a public-private partnership between the IRS and a consortium of tax software companies that offer free e-file services to eligible taxpayers. Free File, which is available through IRS.gov, gives taxpayers free access to the benefits of online tax preparation and e-filing.

“Free File helps taxpayers in underserved and disadvantaged communities, and it’s working,” Everson said.

Each private company sets its own eligibility requirements for the Free File program. The IRS hosts the Free File Web page, but the online tax preparation occurs on the companies’ Web sites. The companies file the returns using IRS’s secure e-file transmission system. To find out more about Free File, visit the IRS Web site.

**2004 FILING SEASON STATISTICS**

Cumulative through the week ending 3/21/03 and 3/19/04

	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>% Change</u>
<b>Individual Income Tax Returns</b>			
Total Receipts	66,971,000	68,182,000	1.8
Total Processed	60,744,000	63,220,000	4.1
<b>E-filing Receipts:</b>			
TOTAL	38,659,000	43,048,000	11.4
TeleFile (phone)	3,182,000	2,973,000	- 6.6
Computer	35,477,000	40,075,000	13.0
Tax Professionals	27,438,000	30,195,000	10.0
Self-prepared	8,039,000	9,880,000	22.9
<b>Tax Year 2003 Refunds Certified:</b>			
Number	54,988,000	57,516,000	4.6
Amount of principal	\$ 111.483 billion	\$ 122.373 billion	9.8
Average refund	\$2,027	\$2,128	4.9
<b>Direct Deposit Refunds:</b>			
Number	32,564,000	35,918,000	10.3
Amount	\$ 78.159 billion	\$ 89.001 billion	13.9
Average	\$2,400	\$2,478	3.2